

Penalties prove costly as Vikings lose third

Vernon Vikings suffered their third loss in four starts Thursday when they were edged by Merritt Centennials before 740 fans, in Merritt.

Penalties were costly for both teams but the difference was Centennials speedy forward Darrell Zelinski.

Zelinski, 20, was sensational and brought the crowd to its feet twice with rink-length rushes. The three-year veteran scored twice and added two assists.

VIKINGS AHEAD

Darcy Wilkinson put Vikings ahead at 10:53 of the first period when he beat goalie Randy Struch with a perfect shot from left wing.

Zelinski tied the game, less than two minutes later, with Vikings two men short. Moments later, Vernon had a two-man advantage but couldn't score.

Danny Rota put the Cents ahead at 1:05 of the second period when Vikings were again two-men short. At 3:56, a bad clearing pass by Jack Lefley led to another power play goal by Zelinski.

Then, again on a power play, at 5:51, Kirk Aulin lengthened the Merritt lead to 4-1.

Vikings got one of those goals back at 16:38 when Calvin Halasz scored on a power play.

But, Vernon blew its chance to stay within striking distance when Rick Hendricks scored a short-handed goal for Merritt after some fine forechecking by Zelinski. Vikings' goalie Keith Ferner looked shaky on the shot.

The third period belonged to Vikings for the most part as the Centennials spent much of the final 20 minutes short-handed. Dean Chaben jumped Vernon forward Grant Sidnick and was assessed a minor and major penalty.

NARROWED GAP

During Chaben's time in the sin bin, Steve Danshin narrowed the gap to 5-3. Then at 16:35, on another power play, rookie defenceman Dean Pratico made the score 5-4.



DARCY WILKINSON
... scored opener

Wilkinson had a chance to tie the game for Vernon with 30 seconds left when he let a hard shot go from inside the

point that Struch made a great save on.

Besides getting four points, Zelinski killed penalties, played power play, and hit more than he usually does.

Vikings' Coach Joe Tennant said, "Merritt has got a pretty good hockey club. They'll be tough to beat this year, they're big and well-balanced."

FOUR POINTS

Other than Zelinski, Hendricks a rookie, played a standout game with three assists to go with his goal.

Best of the Vikings were forwards Rick Simpson and Grant Sidnick.

Tennant said he plans on releasing three or four players today from his 24-man roster.

Struch made 36 saves for the Cents while Ferner blocked 28 for Vernon. Merritt picked up 44 minutes in penalties, while Vikings were handed 39 minutes.

Beaird rambles, and Bombers tie

TORONTO (CP) — Rookie running back Steve Beaird is turning out to be Chuck Ealey's best friend in the Winnipeg Blue Bombers backfield.

When Ealey falters, Beaird always seems to be there to take up the slack, as he did Thursday night in leading a Winnipeg rally for a 21-21 tie against Toronto Argonauts in a Canadian Football League interlocking game.

Eastern Conference		W	L	T	F	A	P
Ottawa	8	4	0	277	220	16	
Montreal	7	4	0	265	222	14	
Toronto	3	8	1	193	237	7	
Hamilton	2	8	1	192	296	5	
Western Conference		W	L	T	F	A	P
Edmonton	9	2	0	306	245	18	
Saskatchewan	7	4	1	281	238	15	
Winnipeg	5	5	1	208	234	11	
B.C.	4	7	0	211	244	8	
Calgary	4	7	0	259	253	8	

A week ago in Winnipeg, quarterback Ealey had difficulty passing in strong winds and Beaird took over the bulk

placed by Ralph Brock in the second half.

Brock was fortunate to call a draw play just at the same time the Argo defence called a blitz and, when Brock handed off to Beaird, the Winnipeg runner found an open path up the middle, going 51 yards for the third-quarter touchdown.

"We were very lucky," said Brock. "I'm just glad it happened that I called the draw play that time."

The Bombers could have won the game at that point with a two-point convert but decided instead to play safe and settled for the tie with Ruoff's onepoint kick.

Despite having to settle for the tie, the Argonauts had some cause for rejoicing after new quarterback Steve Joachim led the team to three touchdowns in the first half—the first time the Toronto offence has scored that many touchdowns in any